construction of the godown would be provided after the completion of the project. For persons belonging to SC/ST and hilly areas and North Eastern State the quantum of subsidy is 33.33%. The scheme has been approved on 26.2.2002. Under the Scheme, new storage capacity of 18.50 lakh tonnes and modernisation of cooperative godowns of 1.50 lakhs tonnes has been envisaged. A sum of Rs.90.00 crores has been allocated for implementation of the scheme, by March 31st, 2003.

Development of Golden Rice at A.P. Agricultural University

2514. SHRI K.M. KHAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether scientists at the Directorate of Rice Research at A.P. Agricultural University, Hyderabad are working on a project to develop Indian variety of vitamin 'A' enriched Golden Rice which would help in preventing blindness, particularly among the children;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this project is being financed/funded by IARI, Pusa;

(d) whether more strains of rice, enriched with vitamin 'A' are being developed in research centres of other Agricultural Universities, including IARI; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) Directorate of Rice Research, Hyderabad a unit of Indian Council of Agricultural Research has submitted a research project to Department of Biotechnology for developing vitamin 'A' enriched Golden Rice Indica varieties. The likely project at the Directorate of Rice Research, Hyderabad will be basically using the transgenic Taipei-309 line as donor to transfer the Beta carotene biosynthetic genes into the Indica rice varieties like Swarna, Tellahamsa, Vijetha and Sarjoo-52 using molecular markers. However, no such project are being carried out at A.P. Agricultural University, Hyderabad.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) and (e) Besides Directorate of Rice Research, Hyderabad, Indian

Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore and University of Delhi, South Campus, will also be working for transfer of Beta Carotene genes to other Indica Rice varieties such as Pusa Basmati-I, Mahasuri and ASD-16.

Decline in land fertility by ground water contamination

†2515. SHRI KRIPAL RARMAR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of hazards of contamination of ground water and decline in fertility of land, due to excessive use of chemicals, fertilisers and insecticides;

(b) if so, whether Government have made any survey to find out the regions where fertility of land is declining due to this and the extent thereof; and

(c) whether Government propose to take any action to prevent such a situation cropping up in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) The average consumption of fertilizers and pesticides in the country is only 92 kg/ha and 0.57 kg/ha (active ingredient), respectively during 2001-02. This level of consumption is not considered to have hazardous effect on decline in fertility of land. No. systematic survey has been made to ascertain the hazards of contamination of ground water and decline in soil fertility due to excessive use of fertilisers in the country. However, there are few evidences of nitrate contamination in ground water under intensively cropped areas.

(c) The Government is promoting the soil test based balanced and integrated use of chemical fertilisers, organic manures and biofertilisers and also integrated pest management practices. Government is also promoting organic farming through use of organic sources of nutrients like organic manures, rural/urban compost, green manures, bio-fertilisers and also use of mechanical/natural means of controlling weeds and pests including bio- pesticides and bio-agents.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.